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THE DCU AND BEYOND: THE SHARED UNIVERSE!

The DC Universe is a vast and amazing place, breaking free of the primeval with Anthro the first boy and in a sense culminating with Kamandi the last boy. You see, unlike other vast and wondrous comic universes, the DCU has vital characters living in all time periods and all parts of our universe and into many others, too.

Although DC Comics technically began with "New Fun" comics, the DCU can be said to have truly begun with the premiere issue of Action Comics featuring comics' first real Super Hero: Superman. Within a year he was joined by Batman, then Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Hawkman and all the original Golden Age characters. And though the heroes would often share space on covers, there was no real attempt to actually have them meet in the stories until a few years later, and that ultimately resulted in the first Super Hero team comic, All-Star Comics, featuring the fabled Justice Society of America. Suddenly, what was originally a series of separate tales of heroes fighting evil became a massive shared universe which was like nothing anyone had ever seen before.

The original creators of the comics were the ones who had to find their way through a great, unexplored universe. They didn't do it with a plan; in most cases they came up with ideas, threw them out and saw what stuck then rinsed and repeated. Because most of them were not fans of comic books—there had been no comics for them to have been fans of, they probably didn't read the other comics, so they didn't think they were creating a single, vast world. That changed almost five years after the majority of the Golden Age heroes disappeared into the darkness of cancellation.

Under the editorial guidance of Julius Schwartz, DC brought back the Flash. But Julie and his team didn't simply resurrect the Golden Age Flash; they created a brand-new character. Then they created a new Green Lantern, and Atom, Hawkman, and slowly all the others. These new characters happened to appear just as a vast number of baby boomers reached the age where comics would be of interest and the books sold through the roof.

Understanding what they had, DC quickly put them into a brand-new version of the JSA only this time it was called the Justice League of America. A new shared universe was started. DC's characters existed in fictional cities like Metropolis, Gotham, Ivy, Coast, Central City and others, so they didn't always interact, but they did as members of the Justice League of America.

Slowly, all the original creators moved on. Some left comics, others, became icons. The characters were then taken over by a new generation of creators like myself who, because we grew up with a fully established DCU, took the idea of the shared universe even further. We now had thousands of characters we loved and we got to play with them, to pit them against each other in new and untried ways. For many of the Golden Age creators, working in comics was just that: work. For us, raised on comics, we were having fun.

The power of a shared universe is that as new writers, artists and editors, we looked at various characters and scenarios and because we hadn't created them, we were able to see ideas that not even the original creator may have intended or suspected were there. We were looking at the characters with a fresh eye. And as our generation evolved, a new generation followed us, and another followed them, and each looked at the characters with a different attitude and mindset. Some of us remained in the business and evolved our craft, others left and were replaced with creators who had radically new ideas. But all of us were taking ideas that were shared with us and we found ways to share them with new fans and new readers, always trying to keep the characters not only current, but able to adapt to all new world views. Our goal was to take the shared universe and, honoring what came before, keep it constantly fresh and evolving.

Personally, showing respect for what came before and yet moving the DCU into its next phase, was my major goal when I came up with and wrote the first massive crossover book in comics, 1985's *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.

I believe the goals of all the major crossovers since *Crisis* are the very same as I had: keep the characters fresh and exciting. Find a new way to tell our stories so they reflect the attitudes of a new time. If we didn't regularly update our shared characters and universes the comics would, I fear, fade into irrelevance. The world around us changes whether we want it to or not. Everything changes and grows and adapts or becomes extinct. Fortunately each generation of comic book writers understands the need to have our characters grow as well.

The book you're reading is all about the DC Universe and its ever changing landscape. Enjoy it as it tells a story that is vast and always new.

Marv Wolfman,
December 2012

WELCOME TO THE DC UNIVERSE!

DC Adventures: *Universe* is the third book to explore the DC Universe and the final book in the DC Adventures Roleplaying Game line. Inside is information about the past, present, and future of the universe, as well as the other dimensions, which together make up the entirety of the DC Universe. In these pages are hundreds of characters, from alien races like the Psions and Thanagarians to heroes and villains like Arion, Lord of Atlantis and Sonar—along with friends, relatives, and enemies like Commissioner Gordon, Cameron Chase, Bruno Mannheim, Crime Cultists, and many more!

The DC Adventures: *Hero's Handbook* gave you the rules you needed to play a game set in the DC Universe, the two-volume *Heroes & Villains* books populated that world, and this book gives you its history and completes the picture no matter where or when your series takes place! Welcome to the DC Universe! Welcome to DC Adventures: *Universe*!

OVERVIEW

DC Adventures: *Universe* is an overview of the setting DC comics take place in—no matter what the time period, planet, or dimension is. Unlike the two-volume DC Adventures: *Heroes & Villains* books, which were organized alphabetically, this book is arranged into chapters that cover broad subjects like the history of the DC Universe or other dimensions. For the most part these chapters present information about the setting, such as the many cities, historical periods, or alien worlds shown in the comics and why they're important. However, these chapters also include hundreds of characters from the mundane to the fantastic. A number of these characters are the friends, loved ones, and allies of the most popular heroes in the world, while others are the street thugs, criminal masterminds, and super-villains that face off against those same heroes. Each of these characters includes game information (statistics or "stats") that work with the rules presented in the DC Adventures: *Hero's Handbook*, along with some information about each character's history or personality.

As the previous books in the line took an "iconic" view of the characters they presented, this book takes an "iconic" view of the DC Universe, so you can use the information to present the world the way that makes the most sense for your games. With the changes that have occurred over the years, it's difficult to present a single, unified vision of the DC Universe, but everything included here has been in some way significant to the setting and is included for that reason. Instead of being a complete and accurate history, this book focuses on the *essence* of the DC Universe, including the high points and important events that make it the universe you see in the comics!

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As an overview of the history of the DC Universe, filled with locations strange and wonderful, populated by characters from the ordinary to the super-powerful, this book can be used in a number of ways for both players and Gamemasters, depending on your needs.

First, it's a resource for the Gamemaster. With hundreds of characters included in this book, you should be able to find any number of allies and enemies for your player's heroes. All the work of writing up the characters has been done for you, so you can spend your time coming up with a fun game to run for your friends!

Second, this book is *filled* with information to inspire story ideas—long-term and short-term plots by villains—probably even more so than the previous books in the DC Adventures line, because the information is drawn from every corner, time, world, and dimension of the universe!

Third, some of these characters can be run by your players. We've highlighted the ones that are exactly the right power point total for new characters of their power level. If someone is playing for the first time, forgot their character, or just wants to sit in for a game session, just grab one of these characters and start playing!

Fourth, you can use the information here to create your own heroes and villains—and tie them in to the aspect of the DC Universe you find the most interesting or inspiring! As with the *Heroes & Villains* volumes, you can pick and choose powers you like, adapt them to the character concept and power level you want and with a little bit of work you have a new creation that's all your own! When a player asks, "How do I create a character like...?" all you need to do is flip open the book and see!

Really, there's no wrong way to use this book. It's a resource for you and your players to become more familiar with both the well-known and the hidden places of the DC Universe. However it helps make your games more fun and interesting, then that's the correct way to use it.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

From the beginning of time to Vanishing Point, Amazon Warriors to the Time Trapper, Metropolis to Oa, and everywhere and *everywhen* in between, this book is the Gamemaster's number one resource for setting a game in the DC Universe.

Chapter 1: History is all about the past. From the beginning of time up to the modern day, it covers the most important times and characters in history. As you might expect, the rest of the book builds on this foundation.

Chapter 2: Earth covers the planet Earth in the modern day. Since it's likely the default setting for most DC Adventures series, it covers everything from the small towns and big cities in America to other countries—along with their inhabitants, whether they be normal people or super-powered like China's team, the Great Ten.

Chapter 3: Beyond Earth expands the scope to all the worlds and places of significance in the modern day, but throughout the entire universe. It includes information on the Guardians, Oa, and the Green Lantern Corps, other planets like Rann, Colu, Bizarro World, and Appellax, and many of the races found on these worlds.

Chapter 4: Other Dimensions takes a trip into worlds other than the one in which Earth is found. Here, places such as Azarath, the Green, the Dreaming, and the 52 parallel worlds that make up the multiverse are explored along with the people and entities that dwell there.

Chapter 5: Into the Future, finally, covers everything from the near-future of tomorrow through the end of time. The 31st Century of the Legion of Super-Heroes is covered in some depth, including many of the worlds and people (or rather, aliens) that populate that setting. The chapter wraps up discussing the end of time, Vanishing Point and the Linear Men.

The characters and groups on the following pages appear in the chapter and section that makes the most sense for them in terms of their place in the world. Commissioner Gordon appears in Gotham City, "Bat" Lash is in the 18th and 19th Centuries, a Thanagarian Wingman is alongside Thanagar, and so on. Admittedly that can make finding a specific character a bit tricky because it assumes some knowledge of the DC Universe, but each of the characters also appears in the Table of Contents and Index, so those are good places to look if you can't find what you're looking for.

Lastly, since it wasn't possible to include every character ever mentioned in the comics, or even every character mentioned in this book, the characters included can often be used as the basis for similar characters. So, "Bat" Lash is included and can easily and quickly be modified to represent any number of other gunfighters of the same time period.

HOW TO READ CHARACTERS

In order to save space, and because *most* of the characters in this volume don't require it, each character is presented in a "short form" stat block. While these are more compact than what most characters from the previous books have used, they contain everything you need to use the character in your game.

Every character entry and many of the team entries include game information so you can use them in your games. Each entry follows a few rules to make them consistent and easier to understand at a glance.

- If appropriate, characters are presented in their super-powered identity. This means when you look at Captain Carrot, what you're seeing is him in his super-powered form, not plain ol' Rodney Rabbit, all-star writer/artist of the *Just'a Lotta Animals* comic series.
- If a character can vary their abilities in some way, say due to the Growth power or because they can change forms somehow, then there are two numbers separated by a slash. Characters like this are also accompanied with asterisks and notes to call attention to what scores are affected and when they have their higher scores or their lower scores. Lastly, unless a character's powers say otherwise, you can always choose to have them operate at less than full power if it fits your game better.

NOT WHAT YOU EXPECTED?

The characters and information may not match up exactly with your expectations of how you feel they should be presented in terms of the history of the DC Universe or how they should be presented in the DC Adventures game. That's unfortunate, but while writing this book and designing these characters the writers and developer had to make choices, settle on what they felt was the best choice, and move on. Our goal was to make the setting and the characters as iconic and representative as possible.

As with all games, realism often took a backseat to writing up a character that was effective given his or her role in the DC Universe. So, some characters may have an ability score, attack or defense value, or power that just doesn't look right to you. That may very well be. These characters were created to reflect how they appear to operate in the comics. Maybe Kilowog should have a higher Dodge and Parry along with a lower Toughness than he has, but if that were the case he wouldn't be the juggernaut he's shown to be in the comics. Since he is, his values needed to reflect that.

You are, of course, welcome to change any of these characters—or the history of the DC Universe—to suit your tastes; the goal of the authors was to present you with a useful sourcebook with information and characters as similar as possible to how they appear in the comics. On the whole this book does that, even if some of the details may not mesh with your concept of how things should be. We hope you enjoy our efforts.

- Characters that lack Powers, Equipment, Advantages, or Skills don't have a space for that category of ability. For example, Harvey Bullock doesn't have any powers, so you won't see a **Powers** entry for him, instead it goes right to **Equipment**, then **Advantages** and **Skills**.
- A character with the Equipment advantage may have only some of their equipment points spent. If this is the case, then you can spend the remaining points as you see fit. Usually this means the character varies his or her arsenal depending on need. You may also elect to leave those points unspent to avoid the additional bookkeeping. Those characters accompanied by a list of equipment always show what that character typically carries.
- Skills and Advantages granted by a power (using the Enhanced Trait effect) appear both in the listing for that power and in the **Skills** or **Advantages** section of the character in *italics*. These aren't the same skill or advantage purchased multiple times, instead they're included under the appropriate headings for ease of reference.
- The **Offense** section of a character includes shorthand notations about the character's attack values and powers (if any). This section does not list all the information about those powers and may not even include all of the powers or abilities that character is capable of using. Be sure to look at the full write-up of the character's powers and advantages in order to learn exactly what they're capable of and what your options are.
- Characters whose point values exactly match the starting number of points they should have for their power level are highlighted in green in the **Appendix**. They are usable as player characters, either using them with their name and history intact or as the basis of very similar characters with a different name and background.
- **Power Level X:** A number characters—such as the Monitors and Dream—are listed as "Power Level X" or "PLX" and given *no* game traits (or very few). This is because these characters are *so* massively powerful, often to the point of near-omnipotence, that there's little point in trying to quantify their abilities. Game traits covering everything they could do would take up pages and add up to *thousands* of power points! Power Level X characters are more plot devices than they are playable characters, meant to provide the heroes with serious challenges that cannot necessarily be overcome with sheer might. Often, defeating them requires a different approach. The GM should see to it that there is *some* way for the heroes to succeed—and for the players to figure it out!—when it comes to PLX foes.

Overall, the characters should be easy to decipher, but the notes above should help if something is unclear. If a character breaks any of the guidelines above, that will be made clear in the character's entry either with notes called out using asterisks or with information in that character's write up.